

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 FRB-03
INR-07 NSAE-00 USIA-06 TRSE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03
SP-02 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 NSC-05 SS-15 STR-04
CEA-01 CAB-02 DODE-00 DOTE-00 FAA-00 /082 W
-----211602Z 045028 /47

R 211444Z APR 77
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2893
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY DUBLIN
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION EC BRUSSELS
USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS
USMISSION OECD PARIS
USNMR SHAPE

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E.O 11652: N/A
TAGS: ELAB, PINT, UK
SUBJECT: IF YOU LOOK CLOSELY, YOU CAN SEE THE SILVER
LINING IN THAT CLOUD

REF: A) LONDON 6180 B) LONDON 5753

BEGIN SUMMARY: THE GOVERNMENT CAN TAKE SOME SOLACE
FROM THE FACT THAT NOT ALL NEWS ON THE INDUSTRIAL RELA-
TIONS FRONT IS BAD. TO BE SURE, AIRWAYS ENGINEERS,
STEELWORKS ELECTRICIANS, NORTH SEA HELICOPTER PILOTS
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AND FORD WORKERS ARE ON STRIKE, AND THAT'S BAD NEWS.
BUT, TO THE GOVERNMENT'S AND THE TUC'S SURPRISE, A MO-
TION PUT FORWARD AT THE SCOTTISH TUC'S ANNUAL CONFERENCE
CALLING FOR AN END TO WAGE RESTRAINT WAS DEFEATED, IF
NARROWLY, AND A LEFT-WING SPONSORED MARCH ON LONDON IN
FAVOR OF ENDING THE SOCIAL CONTRACT "FIZZLED". NEVER-
THELESS, THE GOVERNMENT REMAINS QUITE WORRIED ABOUT

ANOTHER DEAL AND THE PRIME MINISTER HAS INVITED UNION LEADERS FOR DINNER AT 10 DOWNING STREET TONIGHT (APRIL 21) FOR A "VERY INFORMAL GET-TOGETHER" WHERE THEY WILL UNDOUBTEDLY BE APPRISED OF THE GOVERNMENT'S ANXIETIES. END SUMMARY.

1. FIRST THE BAD NEWS: ALTHOUGH BRITISH AIRWAYS STRIKING MAINTENANCE ENGINEERS AT HEATHROW WILL MEET TODAY FOR THEIR SIXTH MASS MEETING TO DISCUSS NEW TERMS, THE STRIKE HAS CONTINUED INTO ITS 19TH DAY (REF A). THE POSSIBILITY OF AN END TO THE DISPUTE, WHICH HAS CRIPPLED BA TRAFFIC ESPECIALLY ON ITS DOMESTIC AND EUROPEAN ROUTES' HAS IMPROVED SOMEWHAT AS SUPPORT FOR THE ENGINEERS AT OTHER AIRPORTS APPEARS TO BE COLLAPSING STRIKING ELECTRICIANS AT BRITISH STEEL'S (BSC) PORT TALBOT WORKS CONTINUES AND LEADERS OF THE ELECTRICIANS. UNION THERE DECLARED THAT THEY WILL NOT RETURN TO WORK WITHOUT A COMMITMENT ON PAY MORE-OVER. BSC WAS UNABLE TO OPEN A NEW 25 MILLION POUND STEEL WORKS AT TEESIDE BECAUSE OF A DISPUTE OVER THE NUMBER OF MEN NEEDED TO MAN THE NEW PLANT

2. IN ADDITION TO THESE DISPUTES. OTHER DISPUTES HAVE DEVELOPED AMONG HELICOPTER PILOTS WHO SUPPLY NORTH SEA OIL RIGS. NORTH SEA HELICOPTER PILOTS WORKING FOR BRISTOW HELICOPTERS AT ABERDEEN ARE ON STRIKE SINCE FRIDAY (APRIL 15) OVER THE DISMISSAL OF ONE PILOT AND LATER FIRING OF 50 OTHERS WHO REFUSED TO TAKE OUT PLANES BECAUSE OF HIS BEING FIRED INITIALLY, BRISTOW LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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HELICOPTERS WAS ABLE TO KEEP SUPPLIES MOVING BY BORROWING PILOTS FROM OTHER AREAS, BUT THE STRIKE IS SPREADING AS OTHER HELICOPTER PILOTS JOIN IN "SYMPATHY STRIKES" AND TRANSPORT WORKERS AND SEAMEN REFUSE TO LOAD OR MOVE EQUIPMENT AND MEN NORMALLY CARRIED BY THE STRUCK HELICOPTER COMPANY. THIS STRIKE, IF IT CONTINUES, COULD BE VERY TROUBLESOME TO THE OIL COMPANIES, PARTICULARLY TO BRITISH PETROLEUM IN THE FORTIES FIELD WHICH USES THE BRISTOW COMPANY. AND AT FORD'S HALEWOOD PLANT, 1000 ENGINEERS AND MAINTENANCE MEN WENT OUT ON FRIDAY (APRIL 15) IN A DISPUTE WHICH BEGAN OVER A DISCIPLINARY MATTER AND DEVELOPED INTO A LARGER PROTEST ABOUT PAY FOR SKILLED WORKERS AND OTHER ISSUES. TALKS TO RESOLVE THE DISPUTE ARE CONTINUING.

3. AND NOW FOR THE SILVER LINING IN THE CLOUD OF GLOOM: YESTERDAY, THE SCOTTISH TUC WHICH IS MEETING IN ROTHESAY, SCOTLAND, NARROWLY DEFEATED A PROPOSAL

1017 TO 967 FROM THE LEFT-WING SCOTTISH MINERS REGION WHICH CALLED FOR AN END TO WAGE RESTRAINT. BOTH THE GOVERNMENT AND THE TUC HEADQUARTERS EXPECTED THE RESOLUTION TO BE PASSED IN THE LEFT-WING DOMINATED ENVIRONMENT WHICH NORMALLY CHARACTERIZES SCOTTISH TUC CONFERENCES, BUT TO THEIR SURPRISE, NOT ONLY WAS THE

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MOTION BEATEN BACK BUT ANOTHER RESOLUTION CALLING FOR A PAY ACCORD TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE TO THE GOVERNMENT WAS ALSO DEFEATED, OUIE SUBSTANTIALLY BY A VOTE OF 1269 TO 790.

4. THE GOVERNMENT AND THE TUC ESTABLISHMENT CAN ONLY

ALSO TAKE HEART FROM THE FACT THAT A LEFT-WING SPONSORED MARCH ON LONDON (REF B), WHOSE SPONSORS EXPECTED UP TO 20,000 PARTICIPANTS FROM ALL OVER THE COUNTRY, WAS A LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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"FIZZLE". AN ESTIMATED 2000-3000 PARTICIPANTS MARCHED FROM SPEAKERS CORNER, HYDE PARK, AND LATER LOBBIED THE HOUSE OF COMMONS AS PART OF THE "DAY OF ACTION" CALLED BY THE SO-CALLED LIAISON COMMITTEE FOR THE DEFENCE OF TRADE UNIONS, WHICH IS AN EXTREME LEFT-WING DOMINATED GROUP AND INCLUDES DEREK ROBINSON, A COMMUNIST WHO IS ALSO A UNION LEADER AT BRITISH LEYLAND.

5. DESPITE THE GOOD NEWS, THE GOVERNMENT IS CLEARLY WORRIED ABOUT THE ULTIMATE OUTCOME OF ITS NEGOTIATIONS FOR A THIRD WAGE ROUND. SENIOR MINISTERS WILL BE TOURING THE HUSTINGS OVER THE WEEKEND, WITH SPEECHES CALLING FOR MODERATION ON PAV FROM THE UNIONS. TONIGHT, PRIME MINISTER CALLAGHAN WILL ENTERTAIN AT DINNER A NUMBER OF SENIOR TRADE UNIONISTS IN WHAT IS BILLED AS A "VERY INFORMAL GET-TOGETHER". OFFICIAL GOVERNMENT SPOKESMEN ARE EMPHASIZING THAT IT IS NOT GOING TO BE A "NEGOTIATING SESSION" BUT ONE OF THEM TOLD US THAT THE PARTICIPANTS "ARE OBVIOUSLY GOING TO LET THEIR HAIR DOWN". THE PRIME MINISTER, IT IS CLEAR, IS NOT BRINGING THEM TO 10 DOWNING STREET BECAUSE OF THEIR GOOD LOOKS. HE WILL UNDOUBTEDLY HAMMER HOME THE NEED FOR A THIRD ROUND WAGE AGREEMENT BEFORE THE EXPIRATION OF THE CURRENT AGREEMENT ON JULY

31. WHEN ASKED LEN MURRAY, TUC GENERAL SECRETARY, ABOUT A THIRD ROUND, HE RESPONDED VERY EMPHATICALLY. "YES, YES, THERE WILL BE A DEAL." BUT NEITHER HE NOR ANYONE ELSE IS PREPARED TO DESCRIBE THE FORM OR SHAPE OF SUCH A DEAL AT THIS POINT, EXCEPT IN AMBIGUOUS AND SOMETIMES CONFUSING TERMS. HOWEVER, EVEN THE TUC SUPPORTERS OF A THIRD ROUND ARE CLEAR ON ONE POINT: IT MUST BE A FLEXIBLE, LOOSE ARRANGEMENT. IT WOULD APPEAR, REPORTEDLY, THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS ALSO RESIGNED TO A POLICY WHICH WILL BE FAR LESS RIGID THAN DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS. THERE MAY BE -- AFTER THE PORT TONIGHT -- SOME CONCENTRATION OF THE MINDS. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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Message Attributes

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